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THE FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Before entering into the discussion of the Yakut family as a matriarchal or patriarchal organization and its connection with the clan or sib, we wish to present a list of the Yakut relationship terms, by blood and marriage, and their linguistic, historical and sociological significance.

Relationship Terms by Blood and Marriage

Abaha

1. The oldest male person in the clan
2. Elder brother of father (uncle)
3. Father's cousin, older than father
4. Son of the older brother of father's grandfather, when he is older than the father
5. Father's uncle
6. Great-grandfather
7. Brother of great-grandfather (compare *bī*, *tai*, and *ubai*)

Aha

1. Father, parent
2. Elder in age, honorary address
3. Priest
4. Nominated father, *ippilahoe*
5. Godfather, *sūraxtax* (or *sūrāxtōbit*) *aha*, *aha*, *buolbut*[1]

Ahai

1. Husband, spouse, when addressed by the mistress of the house to the head (instead of *ārim*), or when speaking of him in his absence, and also when addressing an unrelated but honored man.

**Ahas*

A female relative on the father's side, older than the father; called by men and women alike, thus:—

1. Father's older sister (full, half or stepsister)
2. Older female cousin of father
3. Father's elder female second cousin, etc.

Ābā

Grandmother (father's or mother's mother); honored old woman

Ādar

Young man, youth, lad; brave man, courageous fellow; youthfulness

**Ājū*, *ādjū*, *ājīi*

1. An older woman (than the woman speaking)
2. An older woman relative on the father's or mother's side (with respect, instead of *ahas*); elder sister, elder cousin (uncle's daughter), aunt (compare *sañas*), a cousin's grandmother, sister of great-grandfather or great-grandmother
3. A middle-aged woman

[1] A name originated after the Yakut were baptised.
* Designates classificatory terms.

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Ämäzsin

1. Old woman
2. Grandmother
3. Wife (compare *yaxtar*, *oyox*, *ïotun*)

Är

1. Man
2. A brave, hero
3. Adult age
4. Strength, energy, firmness, courage
5. Husband, also bridegroom, with a possessive pronoun: *min ärim*, my husband

Ärdäx

1. Having a husband, a married person: *ärdäx yaxtar*, *ärdäx xotun*, a married woman
2. Strong, energetic, firm, courageous (adj.)

Äsä

Grandfather (on the mother's or father's side)
xos (or *xat*) äsä, great-grandfather or great-great-grandfather
torut äsä, forefather; clan

Baja

The younger of two wives, See *sañas*

Balys

1. Younger, in comparison with somebody else
2. With a possessive pronoun (*baliym*, *baltyñ*, *balta*, *baltylapa*), a younger female relative on the father's side, independent of the sex of the person speaking:—
    a. A younger sister (full, half, or stepsister)
    b. A cousin (a daughter of a father's brother)
    c. A second cousin (a daughter of the son of the father's uncle)
    d. A niece (a brother's daughter)
    e. A second niece
    f. A second granddaughter (a daughter of a nephew)
3. *Tai balys*, a younger female relative on the mother's or grandmother's side, independent of the sex of the person addressing:—
    a. A cousin (mother's niece)
    b. A second cousin (mother's second niece or grandmother's second female grandchild)
    c. A second aunt (mother's female cousin or grandmother's niece)
    d. *Siän balys*, a second niece (second female grandchild, female grandchild of the father's brother of the person speaking)
    e. *Kürä balys*
        1. Wife's younger sister (compare *iyä kylyn*)
        2. Wife's younger female cousin
        3. Wife's niece
        4. Wife's second niece (=*siän kürä balys*)

Bastyñ

The first, anterior, who is in front, the best, elder, chief, first-born (*bastyñ törüübüt*), first thing

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Baaŋkyk

Most esteemed, distinguished, eminent, famous, grave, important, master, chief, head leader, elder

Batyr

The brave, fearless, heroic, courageous, daring, strong, gallant one; a title particle to the names of heroes in folklore. See *bärgän*, *böhö*, *böhös*.

Bazyy

The housewife

Bädär ös

Lynx clan

**Billäx*

Husband of wife's sister (brother-in-law); cohabitants of one woman call each other; wives of one man call each other; rival, competitor

Biz (compare *ös*)

Clan; family; *biz ös*, tribe, clan, breed, stock, generation, posterity. In the pre-Russian period the Yakut people were divided into *jons* or *bizes* and the latter consisted of gentes (*aha ös*, patriarchal clan)

**Brät*, *barät*, *byrät*

Brother, sister (see *sidäträ*); the Russian word *brat*, brother. The present Yakut have no terms for brother and sister in general but have the following specified names:—

Ini, younger brother
Bi and *ubai*, elder brother
Balys, younger sister
Ahas and *äjii*, elder sister

In olden times the Yakut called brothers and sisters by a common name *juortu* (see *juortu*)

Bratan

Male cousin, a Russian word

Dyaxtar

Woman; wife (see *oyox*)

**Jon* (plur. *joŋnor*)

People, race, community, tribe, crowd, inhabitants of a country; relatives (distant); tribesmen; clansmen:—

Är-jon, men, people
Oho-jon, young people, youths
Kys-jon, girls
Doidu-jons, inhabitants of river valleys
Tya-jons, forest inhabitants
Tas-jons, mountaineers

Opposite of *omuk* (p. 129)

Juortu

In ancient times, brother or sister

Juortular

Brothers and sisters, clansmen, tribesmen

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**Iyə* (Turk. *ənə, ənā*)

Female (comp. *tyəy*); mother; honorary woman matchmaker, who leads the bride's horse or who leads her into the bridegroom's house:—

Iyā kylyn (comp. *aha-kylyn*):—

a. Mother-in-law (wife's mother)
b. Wife's grandmother
c. Wife's aunt
d. Wife's elder sister
e. Wife's elder female cousin
f. Wife of wife's brother
g. Wife of wife's cousin
h. Wife of wife's uncle (*tastyā iyā kylyn*)

Iyā ūsə, each generation into which the clan is divided (see *aha ūsə*)

Imäxsin = *ämäxsin* (see p. 124)

**Ini, inī* (plur. **innälär*)

1. Of a man: the younger one (opposite of *bī*)
2. The father's younger male relative, when the person speaking is a male:—
   a. A brother
   b. A male cousin
   c. A male second cousin
   d. A nephew
   e. A second nephew

Innäl-tärim, my younger brothers; *inī-bī, ikki* (both) *inī-bī*, or *inī-bī ikki*, (the younger and elder brother) whether full, half, or stepbrothers

**Iris*

Elder female relative

Kädyiär, Käyiär

Clan, relatives, offspring (used along with *ujuor*)

Käryän, see *Kulut*

**Kisi*

Man, grown-up man; husband
Är-kisi, grown-up man
Kisi-ärä, everybody
Äddär-kisi, a young man (thirty to thirty-five years old)
Oho-kisi, a youth
Kyə oho kisi, a girl
Saxa-kisi, a Yakut
Jaxtar-kisi, a woman
Uol-kisi, a young man (twenty to twenty-five years old); not married, a youth

Kinit = *Kiyit*

Kinit-Yaxtar, daughter-in-law
Kinniti, the custom of avoidance. The daughter-in-law must not show herself or uncover her body before the elder male relatives of her husband, particularly her father-in-law

**Kulut*

Slave (male and female); servant (male and female); attendant; subject (of a state); knave (in cards):—

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Kulut kyz, a girl slave
Kulut jaxtar, a woman slave
Äŋjä kulut, a slave who attended a young bride when she moved from her father's house into her husband's house
Nähtäl kulut, male or female slave for dirty work including the wiping of the hind part; a slave girl who had to undress a noble girl and to crouch on all fours serving as a mounting block when the latter mounts a horse

**Kürüö bolys*

1. Wife's younger sister (comp. *ijä kulun*)
2. Wife's younger female cousin
3. Wife's niece
4. Wife's second female cousin

**Küöüo*

I. a. Elder sister's husband (when the addresser is a woman)
   b. Elder female cousin's husband (husband of the daughter of father's or mother's brother), no matter who is speaking
   c. Husband of husband's female cousin, addressed by a man

II. Uncle
   a. Husband of father's sister (regardless of the sex of the person speaking)
   b. Husband of a second aunt (of father's female cousin, of grandfather's brother's daughter), regardless of the sex of the person speaking
   c. Husband of the mother's younger sister, when the person speaking is a male

Tai-küöüö, the husband of the mother's elder female cousin, when addressed by a female

**Küüüöl*

1. Bridegroom
2. Son-in-law:—
   a. Daughter's husband independent of the sex of the person speaking
   b. The husband of a man's elder or younger sister, when the person speaking is a male, and the husband of a younger sister only when the person speaking is a female
   c. The husband of the father's brother's daughter, when the person speaking is a male, and the husband of the mother's brother's daughter, when addressed by a male older than the son-in-law
   d. The husband of father's brother's daughter, when addressed by a female older than the son-in-law
   e. Husband of the husband's elder sister or of his elder female cousin
3. Husband of a brother's daughter (niece), independent of the sex of the person speaking
4. Husband of a son's daughter (a female grandchild), independent of the sex of the person speaking
5. Husband of a son's daughter's daughter (female grandchild), when the person speaking is a male

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6. Husband of a husband's niece (of the husband's brother's daughter)
7. Brother of brother's wife
8. *Siän kütüöt*:—
   a. Husband of an older female cousin (of the father's sister's daughter), regardless of the sex of the person speaking
   b. Husband of a husband's female cousin (husband of the husband's father's sister's daughter)
   c. Husband of an elder sister's daughter (niece), when addressed by a male
   d. Husband of daughter's daughter (of a female grandchild), independent of the sex of the person speaking
   e. Husband of a female great-grandchild (of the daughter of a daughter's daughter) addressed by a male
   f. Uncle, husband of a second aunt, of a father's female cousin, of a grandfather's sister's daughter, independent of the sex of the person addressing
   g. Husband of husband's niece, the daughter of the husband's sister

*Kylyn = Kyryn
Wife's relative

1. Wife's father (father-in-law)
2. Father of wife's father, father of the father-in-law or wife's grandfather (= *dsä kylyn*)
3. Brother of wife's father, brother of father-in-law; wife's uncle
4. Wife's brother, brother-in-law (= *uol kylyn*)
5. Wife's nephew, her brother's son (= *uol kylyn*)
6. Wife's male cousin, son of father-in-law's brother (= *tastyñ kylyn*)
7. Second nephew, the son of the father-in-law's brother's son (= *tastyñ kylyn*)
8. *Äbä kylyn*, wife's grandmother
9. *Äsä kylyn*, wife's grandfather or great-grandfather
10. *Iyä kylyn*, wife's elder female relative
    a. Mother-in-law (wife's mother)
    b. Wife's grandmother
    c. Wife's aunt
    d. Wife's elder sister
    e. Wife's elder female cousin (compare *kürä balya*)
    f. Wife of wife's brother
    g. Wife of wife's male cousin
    h. Wife's brother (brother-in-law)
    i. Wife's male cousin (comp. *tastyñ kylyn*)
    j. Wife's nephew (her brother's son = *kylyn*)
11. *Aha kylyn*, husband's elder male relative
    a. Husband's brother
    b. Husband's male cousin
    c. Father-in-law's brother
    d. Father-in-law's brother's son
12. *Ahas kylyn*, husband's elder female relative
    a. Husband's elder sister

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b. Husband's elder female cousin
c. Husband's aunt

13. *Acaygyi kylyn* (or *balys kylyn*), husband's younger sister

*Kynnyaax

Wife's elder male relative (used instead of *kylyn* on solemn occasions or as token of particular esteem), for instance: *ŏoyon kynnyaahym*, my lord father-in-law

Kyrjahas (=*kyryi*+*ahas*)

Old one (comp. *ăspĭ*); old man (comp. *ahonior*); old woman (comp. *ămăzsin*); first-born; clan's head. *Kyrjahas-jon*, old people

*Kys

Girl; bride
Kys aho, girl-child
Kys jon, girls
Kys jaxtaller, young woman; daughter; husband's younger sister (see *ahas kylyn*, p. 128)
Sias kys, female grandchild (on the mother's side)
Aho kys, female grandchild (on the father's side)
Sŭtŭăr kys, a stepdaughter
Ippit kyss, adopted daughter

Nyŭjy=*nŭjy*

Educator, bringer-up, midwife

Noyon

Lad, young man

Oho

Child
Oho-jon, boys
Oho-kisi, boy
Kys-oho, girl
Oholor, children
Ăs-oho, boy

Omuk (see *Jon*)

1. People in general, tribe, clan, gens
   Xaya omukkunŭ? To what tribe or clan do you belong?
   Tŭr omuk, Turkic tribe
2. A man belonging to an alien people, tribe, or clan
   Omuk-kisi, an alien man, a man of an alien tribe or of another clan
3. Tungus, Lamut
   Baikhal omuk, seacoast Tungus
   Tas omuk, mountain Tungus or Lamut
4. Yukaghir wandering tribes
5. The Ostyak and Samoyed

Oyox

Wife, spouse (see *jaxtar*, *xotun*, *ămăzsin*). *Oyox* is used only in some localities

*Sañas

The wife of an older relative on the father's side regardless of the sex of the person speaking. The older of two wives. The younger one is called *bajs*

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1. Brother's wife
2. Cousin's wife
3. Uncle's wife
4. Wife of a second grandfather

Tăi-sañas, the wife of an older relative on the mother's side

1. A cousin's wife
2. Uncle's wife
3. Second uncle's wife
4. A second grandfather's wife = *kyrjahos sañas*

**Siăn*

1. Man or woman born of a mixed marriage: Yakut-Russian, Yakut-Tungus and so on
2. Posterity in the female line as opposed to the offspring in the male line:—
    a. Daughter's children
    b. Daughter's grandchildren
    c. Niece's children
    d. Female cousin's children
    e. Children of grandfather's sister
3. Relatives by marriage:—
    a. Children of husband's sister (comp. *kys*)
    b. Husband's niece's children
    c. Husband's aunt's children
    d. Husband's female cousin's son
4. *Xoe siăn*, grandchild (male or female)
5. *Siăncăr*
    a. Posterity in the female direct and side line:—
        i. Daughter's grandchild
        ii. Daughter's great-grandchild
        iii. Sister's grandchild
        iv. Father's sister's grandchild
        v. Grandfather's sister's children
    b. Relatives by marriage
        i. Husband's sister's grandchildren
        ii. Son of husband's female cousin
        iii. Father's sister's children

**Sătăăr*

Female friend or companion; wives of one man call each other thus; rival (man or woman); stepson

Sătăăr aha, stepfather

Sătăăr-ijă, stepmother

Sătăăr kys, stepdaughter

Sătăăr oyox, second wife (of two)

Syyan

A relative (male or female) by marriage with an alien clan

Syyancar = *Syyan*

**Toyon*

Chief, elder, master (of house), honorary man; husband's father

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Aat-toyon, husband's grandfather
Uol-toyon, husband's elder brother

Törüöt üs

The main, original clan; genealogical table; origins

Törül

Clan; forefather; origin; beginning; root; base

Tüöür, Tügür, Tömür

Relative by marriage; matchmaker; groom's man; bride's maid

**Ubai*

Elder male by age; elder male in the family or clan (see *bi*)

Uol

Boy, youth; son (see *oho*)

Uolan

See *uol*; *uolan-jon*, young men

**Urü*

Relative by marriage; relative in general

Following this presentation of the complete list of Yakut terms of relationship, two points remain to be cleared up: first, the function of the Yakut *Je-usa* (mother's clan) as opposed to the *Aga-usa* (father's clan or gens); and second, the inference to be drawn from Yakut classificatory and descriptive terms of relationship. 614 601

The Yakut mother's clan is not connected with a family organization in which the women have the chief place in the government, or with the mythical race of women of Asia Minor called Amazons. The Yakut man is the real ruler and head of certain social groups. The origin of the term, *Je-usa*, may be explained, as Sieroszevski assumed, by the former existence of polygamy among the Yakut. The children of each wife—and there is no question that the children knew their own mothers—formed a *Je-usa*, but all these groups of mothers with their children were considered to be divisions of the *Aga-usa*, or the father's gens. 595 614 601

Some writers, like Professor Kroeber, have objected to the usual distinctions between classificatory and descriptive relationship systems, but the study of the Yakut terms of relationship leads us to discriminate between classificatory and descriptive terms. Those terms which apply to lineal and collateral relations, consanguinity and affinity in one group, are classificatory terms; on the other hand, terms designating certain particular cases of consanguinity and affinity are descriptive. Classificatory terms are marked in the list by an asterisk. 601

In connection with the statement that the Yakut mother's clan is an integral part of the father's clan, we should like to present some data bearing on earlier matriarchal relations. The Yakut regard them- 614 601

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601 614 selves as the offspring of the mythical Omogoi-bai, in spite of the fact that they originate from his daughter, who married a Tatar or a Buryat.

583 591 606 To the end of the eighteenth century, there remained in vogue among the Yakut the custom of concession of wives. Formerly the bridegroom lived permanently in the house of his father-in-law, but in more recent times he lived there only for a definite period.

The *kalym*, or bride-price, replaced the system of marriage by capture. The origin of the *kalym* may be seen in the simulated enmity of the mother-in-law and the son-in-law.

583 587 837 842 A matriarchal system presupposes looseness of sex relations. The chastity of girls in rich families is not a question of morality but of *kalym*. The *kalym* for a widow or a girl who has had children is low. In the case of a widow, the belief in the right of the deceased husband may limit the number of wooers. A girl with a child, however, is sometimes preferred as a guaranty against barrenness which the Yakut dislike. In Yakut tales, the guest does not ask, "Where shall I sleep?", but, "Where do you put your guests?" and then they are shown to the beds of the girls. This is a form of hospitable hetaerism.

212 592 595 As the ancient Yakut had no written records, we know very little of their former life and particularly of their internal organization. Our information may be summarized in the following.

A household or yard was called *yal;* a group of individuals, who formed a family, as well as each member of the group, was called *kŏrgŏn*. The family consisted of blood relatives as well as of relatives by marriage: sons-in-law, wives (polygamy), adopted children, laborers, and slaves of both sexes. When the Yakut polygamist had several wives, he had several *yals*.

567 592 601 888 At the head of the family was the *aga*, meaning primarily "elder in age" and then "father." All the people of the household were regarded as and called by him "my children," "my sons or my daughters." Among these were included not only his own children, but also all relatives by blood and marriage, by adoption, by purchase (slaves), and any other dependents, as war captives. The *aga* continued to rule as long as he preserved his physical and mental abilities. According to a Yakut tradition, aged parents and also sick and crippled people, unable to work, were doomed to die and were even buried alive after three days of abundant entertainment.

181 888 Trostchansky, who lived as a political exile among the Yakut for about twenty years, characterizes them as egoistical utilitarians.[1] He

[1] Trostchansky, V. F., Notes on the Yakut of the Yakutsk District (*Memoirs, Imperial Society for Archaeology, History, and Ethnography*, vol. 27, parts 2–4, Kasan, 1911, in Russian), 97.

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over land), thereby sustaining the fiction of community of clan interests. A poor kinsman used to call a toyon who had robbed him of his possessions aga (father), and was expected to look upon him as his "benefactor."

Family Customs

The primary unit in the social structure of the Yakuts had long been the family (kergen or yal), which consisted of husband, wife and children, sometimes with the inclusion of other relatives living in the same house. The married sons were usually regarded as a separate household. The family was monogamous, but not too long ago (at the beginning of the 19th century) polygamy also existed among the wealthier section of the population, although the number of wives did not usually exceed two or three. In such cases the wives lived apart, each one running a separate household; the Yakuts explained this custom as a convenient way of looking after the livestock, which were distributed among several wives.

Marriage was preceded, sometimes for a long interval, by matchmaking. There were also traces of exogamy (known from the 17th-century documents); until quite late, males tried to pick their wives from a different clan, while the richer people, not satisfied with this, sought their brides as far as possible in other naslegs or even other ulusy. Having selected the bride, the groom or his parents sent their relatives as matchmakers. The latter, using special ceremonies and conventional language, sought to obtain the consent of the future bride's parents to the marriage, and on the extent of the bride-price (khalyym, or suluu). The consent of the girl herself was not asked at all in the old days. The bride-price consisted of livestock, but the extent of it varied considerably, from one or two to many dozen head; the bride-price always included the meat of a slaughtered beast. At the end of the 19th century there was a strong trend towards taking the bride payment in actual money. Some of the payment (kurum) was spent on the wedding feast (in the 17th-century documents, the word kurum sometimes meant the bride payment as a whole). The payment was considered compulsory, and a girl who married without it considered herself dishonored. The suitor was assisted by relatives, sometimes even by distant kinsmen, in arranging the payment, thus showing the ancient view of a wedding as an all-clan affair. The relatives of the bride also took part in distributing the payment obtained. On his side, the suitor received a dowry (enn'e), partly in livestock and meat, but more often in clothing and utensils; the value of the dowry averaged half the value of the bride-price.

The clan also played an important part in the actual wedding ceremony, which was attended by a large number of guests, relatives of the bride and groom, neighbors and so on. The festivities lasted several days and consisted of extensive feasting, different rituals and amusements, games, dancing, and so on. Not only did the bride and groom refrain from occupying the central place in all this festivity, they hardly took part at all.

In similar fashion to the wedding ceremony, the kinship terminology has also retained traces of the earlier forms of marriage. The name for the son—uol—actually means boy or youth; the word for daughter—kyys—means girl or little girl; father is *aga* (literally, "older"); wife is oyokh, but in some places the wife is simply called d'akhtar (woman), emeekhsin ("old woman") and so on; the husband is er, the older brother is ubay (bii), the younger brother is ini; the elder sister is ed'iy (agas) and the younger sister is balys. The last four terms are also used to denote uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces, and other relatives. Generally speaking,

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the Yakut system of kinship is close to the systems used by a number of Turkic peoples.

The position of women both in the family and in public life was inferior. The husband, the head of the family, enjoyed despotic power, and the wife could not even complain of harsh treatment, which was a fairly common occurrence, if not at the hands of the husband, then at the hands of his relatives. A woman from another tribe, defenseless and lacking in all rights, was burdened with hard work when she became part of a new family.

The position of older people who were decrepit and no longer able to work was also difficult. Little care was shown for them, they were given little to eat and poorly clothed, sometimes even reduced to complete destitution.

The position of children, despite the fact that the Yakuts loved their children, as pointed out by many observers, was also rather unfortunate. The birth rate was very high among the Yakuts and most families produced from 5 to 10 children, sometimes as many as 20 or even more. However, the bad living conditions, poor food and inattention resulted in very high child mortality. Apart from their own children, many families, particularly those in which there were few children, often adopted children, whom they often simply bought from the poorer people.

Newborn babies were washed by the fire in the hearth and rubbed with cream. This operation was repeated fairly frequently later on. The mother breast-fed her child for some time, as long as 4 or 5 years, although in addition the child received a horn of cow's milk. The Yakut cradle was a long box made of thin, bent pieces of wood, in which the wrapped baby was placed, strapped in and left for some time, without being removed. The cradle had a groove to drain away the urine. Older children usually crawled about the earthen floor together with the animals, either half-naked or completely naked, and were left to themselves; sometimes they were attached to the table on a long strap to prevent them from falling into the fire. The children of the poorer people were trained to work from an early age, and had to carry out work according to their strength—such as collecting brush in the forest, looking after smaller livestock, and so on; the girls were trained in domestic duties. The children of the toyons received more attention, were mollycoddled and generally spoiled.

The children had few toys. These were usually wooden figures of animals, tiny bows and arrows, little houses and model utensils, made by the parents or sometimes by the children themselves; and the girls had dolls with model clothes, blankets, pillows and so on. The games of the Yakut children were simple and rather monotonous. The absence of noisy group games is characteristic; generally speaking, when the children of the poorer Yakuts grew up, they were quiet and sluggish.

Religion

Even in the second half of the 18th century, many of the Yakuts had been baptized, and in the 19th century all Yakuts were registered as Orthodox. Although the transition to Orthodoxy was motivated by and large by material considerations (various privileges and grants for those baptized), the new religion gradually became part of their everyday life. In the corner of their dwellings there hung icons; the people wore crucifixes (the large silver crucifix-type embellishments worn by the women are interesting), went to church and many of them, particularly

55:Popov E-5 (no date) 1964 RV2 Yakut RV2
Dolgan

421 was considered collective property, particularly in summer when several households nomadized together. Having killed a wild reindeer, the hunter 224 was expected to give up the skin and meat to the families of his group, but 226 keep the head and neck for himself. During the collective trapping of geese or spearing of wild reindeer a representative was chosen to make the division, and everything caught was divided up by families, according to the number of members.

224 The sites to be used by the nomadic groups for their summer hunting and fishing were decided in the spring, before the mosquitoes appeared. The heads of the groups would agree on the places where their own kin would hunt. Under this system each group hunted in new areas each year. Ownership of the polar-fox traps took a different form. The traps were private property. When setting new traps "behind" (i.e., to the south of) the old ones, no permission was required, but if they were set "in front of" the old ones (to the north), whence the polar fox came, it was essential to have the permission of the owner of the old traps, since when the foxes came down, they would be caught chiefly in the new ones. It was not forbidden to hunt other animals at the sites of the traps.

●601 The system of kinship among the Dolgans was the classificatory type, 882 and the terms used for kinship were Yakut. The family was of the patriarchal type, but the young people enjoyed great freedom until they married.

771 Although the Dolgans were considered Christians and observed the ex-776 ternal, ritualistic aspects of Russian Orthodoxy, they also retained their old animistic beliefs. Deities and spirits were divided into three categories (the same as for the Yakuts): ichchi, or incorporeal, invisible beings, who brought to life anything which they entered; ayyy or spirits well-disposed towards humans; abaasy or spirits hostile towards humans and causing various sicknesses and misfortunes; these lived in the earth and in the underworld. A person was believed to get sick and die because the abaasy had stolen his soul and carried it away to the underworld, and then, in-756 vading the person, proceeded to eat him. The guardians of the people against the wicked spirits and mediators between humans and spirits were [171] the oyun or shamans. The shaman garb and tambourine among the Dolgans were the same as among the Evenks.

776 In their religion the Dolgans worshipped the so-called saytaans. The saytaans could take a great variety of forms, for example, a stone of unusual shape or an ugly wild-deer antler. Any object could be a saytaan if a shaman commanded a spirit, ichchi, to enter it. The saytaans were greatly revered both as family and hunting patrons.

764 The Dolgans buried their dead in the ground. The western (Noril'sk) [531] Dolgans did not usually erect a log structure over the grave, but only left a mound of earth onto which they felled a tree. The eastern Dolgans built log structures over the grave, which they often embellished with intricate carving. A reindeer was slaughtered near the grave and the clothing in which the deceased had died was either left on the ground or hung on the tree.

Folklore

538 The indigenous folklore of the Dolgans was represented by riddles, tales, historical legends, epic poems and stories of everyday life—the latter constituting the predominant type. The stories tell of the nomadic life of the Dolgans in all its real, everyday context. They are brief, but extremely varied in content. Very popular were stories of animals—their origin, their metamorphosis into people and back again. A particular group was composed